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homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE



Friday, April 24, 1942

SUBJECT: "Get Ready for Food Preservation in 1942." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

--ooOoo--

"Waste not, want not" was never a more appropriate slogan than it is this year, particularly in connection with the Victory gardens which so many of you have started in response to the Food-for-Freedom program.

Today we're bringing you suggestions from nutritionists of the U. S. Department of Agriculture on saving the fruits and vegetables you have raised. The first point to consider is that there are several other methods of saving food besides canning it. Shortages of metal and rubber for canning supplies make it advisable to store, dry, brine, or freeze as many products as possible before you plan to can anything.

Of course you'll want to use as many fresh fruits and vegetables as possible while the growing season lasts. Your garden has doubtless been planned to provide for family needs until next year's garden comes in. Don't let anything go to waste. If you find you have more supplies than your family can use in fresh and stored form, see that they get to neighbors or to community centers which can make use of them.

Everything you use fresh during the growing season means that much less pressure on your food preservation facilities. Also, all foods you preserve yourself in one way and another reduce the load carried by commercial canners. They are restricted as to containers this year, and at the same time asked to increase the quantities of foods canned for our military forces, the United Nations, and to sell to city people.

Remember that you can store quite a number of products--either down cellar, or aboveground in mounds, or underground in pits or trenches. The

list includes potatoes, sweetpotatoes, other root vegetables, cabbage, celery, pumpkins, squash, apples, winter pears, and other fresh products.

Then, how about drying some of your corn, shelled beans or peas, cherries, apples, pears and peaches? You could make a top-of-the-stove dryer. If you don't know how to go about this, write to the U. S. Department of Agriculture for directions.

Another way of keeping some products is to make kraut and pickles. You can brine purple top fall turnips and snap beans as well as cabbage, also green tomatoes and cucumbers for pickles.

Again, freezer-locker storage is one of the best means of food preservation if you have a freezer-locker plant nearby. Non-acid vegetables like asparagus, corn, young lima beans, broccoli, peas, and spinach freeze especially well; also berries and peaches.

After you plan to use these four methods as far as possible, you are ready to check over your present canning equipment and see what other supplies you need.

First, sort out glass containers you have suitable for canning. Discard any defective jars. Your egg candling lamp or any frosted electric lamp bulb used in a dark room will show up defects in glass that will not stand processing. Make a list of the new jars, covers, and jar rubbers you will need.

You'll probably be able to get glass jars with glass tops. You may see the regular Mason-type jars and the all-metal gasket type gradually replaced by a newer type, which takes less metal and less rubber. This type of jar has a small flat glass top and a separate metal collar that screws on and holds the top down. It saves rubber by using small rubber rings on top of the jar instead of the ordinary ring on the shoulder of a Mason-type jar.

The metal band uses less material than an all-metal top and you can take it off after a vacuum has developed and use it many times on other jars. The band, with the flat glass top, will fit ordinary Mason-type jars.

The Department of Agriculture say we will have enough rubber rings for ordinary home canning needs. And if you are experienced in canning in tin cans, you can get the type used for home canning. But as the quantity is limited, don't start canning in tin for the first time this year if you have had no experience with that method. Better stick to glass jars.

Most likely you have a good wash boiler with a lid and a rack for water bath canning, or a deep covered bucket or other utensil. But chances of getting a new pressure canner are very slim, owing to the scarcity of metals. A few may be made from materials now being tested, but they are not yet on the market.

So if you are fortunate enough to have a pressure cooker already, see that it is in good working order, and plan to share it with neighbors. Clean the petcock and safety valve, examine the rim and cover for nicks, and test for steam leaks. Especially, have the pressure gage checked by somebody competent. Or test it yourself, according to the directions given in the "canning bulletin"-- Farmers' Bulletin 1762. If you don't have a copy of this bulletin, you can get one by writing to the U. S. Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C.

Meantime, to make your Victory garden and year around food plans a success, and be sure that nothing is wasted, try all five ways of saving the garden produces--storing, drying, brining, freezing, and, finally,--canning.

